

M&O
Serials
QL 671
.G84

THE

MONTHLY



VOLUME 5

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, DECEMBER, 1923

NUMBER 12

DECEMBER MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 13th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Assembly Hall of the Public Library, corner of McAllister and Larkin Streets. Take elevator to third floor. Car lines No. 5 or No. 19.

Dr. Joseph Grinnell, Honorary Member of the Association, will deliver an address on the subject, "Some of our Less Familiar Sparrows," dealing with species of which we encounter specimens but rarely in our local field trips. Visitors will be made welcome.



DECEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, December 16th, to Golden Gate Park. Take McAllister car No. 5, "Beach" sign, to 43rd Avenue entrance on Fulton St. Bring lunch.

The usual route will be followed, passing Chain of Lakes, Stadium, Spreckels, Lloyd and Stow Lakes, and ending at Japanese tea garden, where lunch will be eaten in time for the party to attend the lecture at the Academy of Sciences, by Mrs. G. Earle Kelly, on "The Shore Birds of the San Francisco Bay Region," illustrated with specimens. Leader, Mr. Carl R. Smith.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING: The eighty-second regular meeting of the Association was held on November 8th, in the Assembly Hall of the San Francisco Public Library, with President Kibbe in the chair; Mrs. Carl R. Smith, Secretary; nine members and eight guests in attendance.

A brief discussion took place, dealing with the literature now being put forth by the Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund, of New York and with the proposition of Mr. E. A. McIlhenny for the formation of a sportsmen's organization to be known as the Louisiana Gulf Coast Club which should acquire a tract of 100,000 acres, lying between, and adjacent to, the bird sanctuaries established by the Rockefeller and Sage Foundations. The Corresponding Secretary was requested to secure further and authoritative information with reference to these two projects and to submit the same at the December meeting for the guidance of the Association in formulating its action in the premises.

The feature of the meeting consisted of an address by Mr. Joseph R. Slevin, Assistant Curator of Herpetology, California Academy of Sciences, in which he gave a brief account of the 1905-6 Academy Expedition to the Galapagos Islands, with more particular reference to the giant tortoises and birds encountered at that time. The expedition sailed on June 5th, 1905 on the schooner Academy formerly the Ernest, of the United States Coast & Geodetic Survey, returning on Nov. 29, 1906, having made no other port in that interval. The Galapagos are crossed by the equator in longitude 90° W from Greenwich. They were discovered in 1535 and were better known from that time to 1860 than they are now. There are two Ecuadorian settlements

in the group, one on Albemarle and another on Chatham Islands, with a total population of a few hundreds, principally engaged in the cultivation of sugar plantations and in a state of peonage.

The tortoises are simply giant types of our desert tortoises and they are difficult to find as their numbers have been steadily reduced by hunting. Whalers and bucaners have been responsible for the reduction in numbers, for in their heyday the Galapagos constituted the headquarters from which the meat supply was derived by these hardy voyagers. Tortoises can go for six to eight months without food or water, and the whalers, mostly from New Bedford, could take several hundred aboard and thus have a supply of fresh meat alive "on the hoof," so to speak, for long periods. The recent expedition of the American Museum of Natural History spent only about thirty days in the group and it is thought that the brevity of their stay accounts in a large measure for the comparatively small numbers of tortoises encountered by the members of the party.

The California expedition found tortoises on each of the eleven islands, being one more than previously recorded. On Albemarle were found five species and on each of the others, one. On Duncan, of a smaller variety the California party saw one hundred individuals, while the American Museum party found only one because of not going far enough. The tortoises are covered to a degree on their backs with mosses and lichens and they look exactly like rocks. It is interesting to know that they consume quantities of cactus and their mouths are found as full of spines as that of a wolverine with porcupine quills. Rats, dogs and cats abound on the islands and a small mouse is also found there. A species of iguana, five feet long and weighing twenty to twenty five pounds, feeds on the sea weed between tides. It is very powerful, but harmless. The strictly land iguanas are smaller, but very vicious. In addition to these reptiles there are found a few small lizards and small snakes, none of which is poisonous. The natives use the iguanas for food.

As for birds, there is a flightless cormorant which climbs out of the water and returns by falling off the rocks, but these were found in only two places and in small colonies. The islands are the most northpoint reached by the little Galapagos penguin. The Galapagos pintail is here in large numbers and, not being hunted, is very tame. Flamingoes were encountered in flocks of twenty to thirty birds which were not wild but quite wary. Barn and short-eared owls were met and the Galapagos hawks were very abundant and tame, being readily killed with stones. The Galapagos doves, similarly, could easily be killed with a stick. Several species of the genus *Geospiza*, a finch-like bird with a large bill, peculiar to the group, occur here, and flycatchers by the thousands, so unafraid that they will eat from ones hand and may be caught in that way or with a butterfly net. The sea birds are numerous, notable among them being the Galapagos albatross, which nests only on the islands of this group. Over six hundred colonies were noted. The district is a lonely one and only one ship was sighted during the stay of more than a year.

Strenuous efforts were made to explore Indefatigable Island, but it was found impossible to attain a height of more than 2,000 feet, as progress through the dense jungle growth and over the rough lava rocks was so slow that one could not pack sufficient food and water to reach higher altitudes.

A brief stop was made at Coral Island, where notable birds were parakeets and pigmy owls. Clipperton Island is a typical atoll no higher than nine feet above high water, except for the one pinnacle of Clipperton Rock, forty feet high. No vegetation exists on the island, over which sooty and noddy terns swarm. There were found two men who had spent eighteen months in that inhospitable place, guarding a guano concession. They were overjoyed to see the schooner, but gravely disappointed when they found that she had not come to take them off.

THE GULL

Thirteen days were spent at Cocos Island, where people seldom land. Sea birds are abundant and large numbers of boobies were found nesting. The profuseness of rainfall may be judged by the fact that all the tanks of the schooner were filled with rain water in the space of ten days. The island has long held a reputation for buried treasure but no one has ever acknowledged finding any. Capt. Erstler, however, has had the strength of his convictions for he has spent seven years here, accompanied by his wife and fifteen Costa Rican laborers, in an unrelenting search for the treasure. This has all the aspects of a long distance record.

The meeting expressed its appreciation of the very interesting account given by Mr. Slevin and adjourned after discussion of various features thereof.



Subsequent to the meeting, the Board of Directors assembled and elected to membership Mrs. Mary U. Hall, of Berkeley, and Mr. I. M. Parry, of San Francisco.



BIRDS IN ARGENTINE INDIAN FOLKLORE

III. Caráu

The popular Indian name, "Caráu", means a dark or black bird, *Aramus scolopaceus carau*. It is a limpkin or courlan, a link between the cranes and the rails.

It lives in swampy places or around the margins of lakes, on sandy beaches or along rivers that run through the jungle.

In these locations the Caráu digs out small mollusks, which it expertly extracts from their shells.

It is very wary and difficult to approach. When frightened it has the habit of flying to the top of the nearest tree or bush for observation, or again it may run to the shadow of the nearest low vegetation, wading and threading its way through the brush to some dark corner, where it is discovered with difficulty owing to its protective coloration.

The guitars were pulsating with the strains of a lively Indian dance. The Fiesta was at its height, and the participants, stimulated by fermented cane juice, and by the malign influence of a terrible norther which had reigned since the break of day, gradually threw aside their native caution, and even the most taciturn became gay.

The norther increased in violence, roaring through the reeds of a neighboring marsh, and lashing the branches of the umbrella trees which served as an arbor to shelter the dancers.

The merriment was at its height and the violins were sounding the closing measures of the roundelay when the hoof-beats of a galloping horse were heard. All turned to see who the late-comer might be when out of the storm a horseman burst, reined in his horse, leaped from his saddle and without greeting or even awaiting an invitation, strode into the arbor. It was a young man with high forehead, insolent looks and imperious gestures. "Caráu", murmured the guests one to the other, with glances of mysterious import.

The new comer pushed his way between the couples without waiting according to custom, for the master of ceremonies to select him a partner, and reaching the bench where the señoritas were seated, he caught up, almost without her permission, the girl who, by acclaim had been declared the belle of the Fiesta.

The guitars preluded an entrancing dance and all the couples fell back to watch the arrogant youth dance with his partner.

THE GULL

Once again flying hoofs were heard from the road and a second rider appeared. All eyes were turned towards the exhausted horse and the white faced rider whose looks showed he brought news of ill omen. The dancers opened their files to let him pass. Who could this unknown be?

"Caráu", he cried, "thy mother has but just died, thy family sends thee word by me". No expression of surprise or pain showed on the face of Caráu. He threw a proud look around on those who awaited the finale of this drama, and then bending towards his companion with amorous glance, he drew her into an improvised measure as the opening notes of the guitars introduced another round, and cried with sarcasm, "there will be time enough to mourn".

The Fiesta became wilder and wilder as the norther increased in violence, until towards morning a terrific gust of wind blew out the flickering lights and a great owl hooted mournfully as it was borne on the wings of the wind. The pallid light of the dawn showed in the east as the cock crew for the last time. Caráu was the last to retire from the Fiesta.

* * * * *

Never was he seen again by mortal eyes, but the legends recount that from that time a new bird appeared in the forest and among the reeds, an unknown bird, dark dweller of the jungles and of the marshes, with a song that is yet not a song, but a sob, a mournful cry that is heard only in the watches of the night, and which carries fear and dread to the hearts of even the bravest. It is, as an old Indian told me, the soul of Caráu, condemned to weep incessantly for his sin.

END.

* * *

NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, the 11th, to Ross, Lake Phoenix and to and around Lake Lagunitas. The day was cloudy in the early morning but beautiful as soon as the tunnel was passed. The features of the day was the variety of waterfowl on the two lakes and among these were numbers of ring-necked ducks in both instances.

Members in attendance were: Mesdemoiselles Paroni and Sterne; Mesdames Kibbe and Northway; Messrs. Lastreto, Kibbe, Ananda and Eric Jacobs. As guests, Mrs. Adams and little Miss Adams; Misses Bastian, Cohen, Hillman, Meyer and Noe; Mr. Bailey and Felix Jacobs. Eight members and nine guests.

Birds encountered: On the Bay, Western, California, Bonaparte, gulls, cormorant and sandpipers. Inland, Pied-bill grebe, mallard, baldpate, red-head and canvas-back; scaup, ring-necked and ruddy ducks, great blue heron high up in a redwood, and coot; spotted sandpiper, quail, sparrow hawk, kingfisher and red-shafted flicker; black phoebe, California jay, crows, linnet and green-backed goldfinch; Nuttall sparrow, junco, San Francisco towhee, Audubon and Townsend warblers; titmouse, bush and wren-tits, golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets; Townsend solitaire, hermit thrush and bluebird. Thirty-eight species.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

President.....	A. S. Kibbe.....	1524 Grove St., Berkeley
Recording Secretary.....	Mrs. Carl R. Smith.....	563 42d Ave., San Francisco
Corresponding Secretary.....	C. B. Lastreto.....	260 California St., San Francisco
Treasurer.....	C. R. Thomas.....	1605 Rose St., Berkeley

Meets second Thursday of each month, at 8:00 p.m., in Assembly Hall of San Francisco

Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets.

Address Bulletin correspondence to President.

Subscription to Bulletin alone, 35c per year.

Single copies 5c